

Adventures of Hawkins by Your Every Day Stranger Addict

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Adventure, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Lucas S., Mike W., Nancy W.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-03-21 14:39:49

Updated: 2017-04-27 20:48:18

Packaged: 2019-12-17 15:22:06

Rating: T

Chapters: 9

Words: 17,099

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Eleven is finally home, studying hard for school while spending time with Mike and making new friends. The adventures of the young teens continue as things return to normal, yet will never be the same.

1. Chapter 1 (03-23 14:40:19)

(Author's Note). That's for looking at my fanfiction! This is my first one, I'm sure it sucks so please leave a review of you can.

(Two days after Eleven's disappearance)

Mike

As Mike walked down his basement stairs, he looked at the fort he made for El. He sighed as he walked over and laid down in it. Mike has spent most of the past days in her old fort. Being in their made him remember her. He wrapped himself in a ball and got lost deep in thought. Is she alive? Is she in the Upside Down? Do the bad men know where she is? Do they have her? He began to quietly cry.

He grabbed and turned on his walkie talkie. "Hello"? Mike waited before continuing. He wanted to talk to her. This is the only way, he thought. "El, you probably can't hear this". He felt the tears coming before he finished his first sentence. "But if you can hear me, I know you are alive, I will not stop looking for you, ". He paused. He thought he heard a quiet noise. "El? Is that you? Over".

"No it's Lucas, over".

"Oh", Mike said, clearly disappointed. There was an awkward silence for a few seconds. He realized Lucas could have been listening the whole time, but he didn't care.

Lucas realized he didn't say over. Mike never forgets to to say it. *That is kind of annoying*, he thought. "How you holding up? Over", said Lucas.

"I know you think I'm crazy, but I don't think she is dead. We would know it. Why would her body disappear if she died? It just doesn't make any sense. I don't care what you all say. As soon as my parents leave I'm searching for her". Mike paused. "Over".

"I don't think you are crazy, there's a good chance she is alive. When are your parents leaving? Over".

"They took 2 days off, they be at work tomorrow. Over".

"I'll meet you at your place at 10, Over".

"I'll see you then, over and out".

Mike turned his walkie talkie off and pushed the antenna in. He curled into a ball in El's fort. He was lonely. His mother tried to talk to him. After an hour of her trying to engage Mike in a conversation, she got sick of his one-word responses and gave up. He wanted to talk to Will, he was always the one who understands him. Even though he doesn't know El, he would understand. Will was still in the hospital. Even if he was out, Mike didn't want to ask him for help looking for her. The path he assumed searching for El would take them places that would rekindle his past memories. Mike thought he had been through enough.

Michael heard footsteps. He turned around and saw Nancy. Her eyes were red and she had bags under her eyes. "Hi Mike".

He returned to his ball-like position. "Please, just leave me alone".

"Mike I don't think you should be alone right now".

"Why? She is not dead, she can't be. She is just missing", Mike said. He somehow managed to hold back the tears, but his voice made his emotions obvious.

"Look, Mike, I know what you are going through".

"No you don't, at least you know what happened to Barb". He regretted saying those words already.

Nancy ran up the stairs as she began to cry again. Mike ran up after her. "Nancy I'm sorry, I didn't mean it", he said.

She wiped away the tears and plopped herself in their la-z-boy. "It's okay, I know you didn't mean it".

Mike ran back down and grabbed his walkie talkie. As he climbed up the stairs again he swore to never let it out of his sight.

Eleven

Eleven tried to save as much energy as possible to survive. There was no way to tell time but she thought she has been in the Upside Down for at least a day, maybe more. El walked slowly through the fog, breathing in the thick air. She was trying to find Mikes house. She remembered what it looked like but she did not know how to get there.

The only source of food she could find was a small box in the woods, but she knew that wouldn't keep her alive forever.

She continued to walk around Hawkins. She saw a large fence. The Lab. El had to think. Should I go through the portal at the Lab? I might be taken by the bad men. I may never see Mike again. She sat down, back against a tree. The only way back is through the portal in the lab. She continued to think, I should sleep so I can defend myself. She checked her surroundings one last time and closed her eyes.

The sky wasn't dark. Eleven looked up and saw the sun. She almost forget what the sky looks like, only knowing it about for one week. She squinted as she felt pain in her eyes. El looked around, she was in a neighborhood, not just any neighborhood, Mike's Neighborhood. She walked about 50 feet to his house. There was Mike's bike laying down on his lawn. She remembered riding on the back of his bike. When the bad men were chasing them she wrapped him close, in her arms, and rested her head on his back. She remembered feeling his warmth on that cold day...

El noticed the dress she was wearing was clean and she had long brown hair. *Pretty*, she thought. She entered and saw that the basement door was open. She walked downstairs and saw Mike in his fort. He looked up.

"El"?

"Mike".

He got up and ran to her. He put her in his arms and didn't let go. "Is this real"?

"I think so". Mike gently pulled away.

"Where are you"?

"Upside down".

"Is the gate in the lab still open"? She nodded. "I'm coming for you, understand"?

She noticed tears running down Mike's face. Strange, she thought. Why would he be crying and smiling at the same time? Then El realized she was doing the exact same thing.

The dream became to fade away. "Promise"?

"I promise, just stay where you are, I will find you..."

El woke up alone in the darkness.

2. Chapter 2

(Author's Note) Thanks for the reviews! I wrote this fast, so sorry if there are some errors, or just shitty writing in general. The reviews on the first chapter really inspired me, please consider leaving one!

Thanks for reading!

Eleven

Did I just talk to Mike in a dream?

El got up from the tree, about 100 feet from the lab. El walked forward, using all the bravery she had left in her to face the bad men. She walked up to the fence, opening it with her mind. She felt the familiar feeling of pain and ignored it. *I've felt worse*. She remembered where she was and where she was going. *I'm going to feel worse*, she thought.

El considered to stay where she was, like Mike said, but how would he ever save her. He would have to go through the bad men, and that was only if they could even get in the lab. *No*, she thought. *They would hurt Mike, I have to go now*.

El kept walking. She got to the door and was able to open it without using her powers. She hesitated. It may have looked different from the real lab but it was no less frightening. *I can't turn back*, she thought. El walked down the familiar halls until she got to the room with the bath. She saw it... the portal. There was a glass wall across from the gate, where Dr. Brenner and the other scientists were during her tests. El recalled the events as it opened. She caused a panic. Half a dozen people ran. There was, however, a man who helped her out of the bath and led her up the elevator. He showed her a tunnel to escape. El felt guilty for not knowing his name. *Maybe not all scientists are bad*, she thought.

El put her hand against the mush on the gate, hesitated at first, then climbed through.

Eleven stumbled as she entered the other world. The room was

familiar, more than she wanted it to be. Out of the corner of El's eye she saw movement. She turned around and snapped the neck of a man in a hazmat suit. After the severe flash of pain went away, El made a run for it. She passed by corridors still damaged from weeks ago. There was no lighting but she knew the way to the elevator

El pressed the button and flipped her back against the wall. She saw two men in hazmat suits running, one of them had a needle. without hesitation she shattered the needle.

"Stay back," she said, with all the courage she could muster. Much to her surprise, the bad men slowed down.

"Please don't hurt us," one said.

"I have a wife, and a child your age," begged the other. El didn't respond, but stepped through the elevator as it opened.

She stood in the elevator, alone. The lights still have not been restored, so it was pitch black. Past memories flooded Eleven's mind: Her being locked in the room by the bad men, and El being alone, not saying a word for hours.

As the doors opened, Eleven mentally prepared herself. There was a small drop of blood running down her nose, wiping it off before she took off with as much speed she could gather from her worn-out shoes. El ran through her old home, passing her room and the dark place. She got to the zipper into the "uncontaminated" part of the lab. El reached out with her mind and pushed him forward. Hard. *I hope I didn't kill him*, she thought. She unzipped the door and ran through. She ran towards the exit, knocking two others down on the way. She heard a loud noise and felt someone try to grab her side.

Eleven finally made it to the door. She pulled on the handle and it opened. She felt the cold air of December touch her skin. It was dark out. El knew she wasn't safe yet. She ran towards the gate. *Something is wrong*. The gate was opening. El paused.

"RUN," yelled the gate guard. Before she ran away she asked the man his name.

Patrick, I will never forget him.

Mike

Mike sat up in his bed. He threw on jeans and a shirt and turned on his walkie talkie. "Lucas are you there? Over." He looked at the time. 2:53. He couldn't go looking for El alone. "Lucas, I need you to answer. Over." No response. "Lucas. Lucas. Lucas."

"What do you want? Do you know what time is it?"

"We need to go searching right now. Over."

"Uh.. ok. Over," said Lucas.

"I'll meet you at your place in 10, over and out."

Lucas

Lucas hopped out of bed and quickly threw on some clothes. He grabbed his backpack and snuck quietly down his stairs. He opened and closed the door slowly so it didn't make too much noise. He had to wait outside because if Mike rang the doorbell or knocked his parents would wake up. Lucas could not imagine the hell they would let loose if he was caught.

Lucas waited about a minute until he saw Mike biking up the driveway.

"Hey, let's go," said Mike.

"Wait, I want to find El as much as you do but why are we going so early?"

"I'll tell you on the way," Mike said. They took off on their bikes.

"It's hard to explain... I had a dream."

"What?"

"I think that El can use her powers to communicate through dreams."

"How do you know it wasn't a regular dream," said Lucas?

"I don't know, I've dreamed about El before but this one just," he paused, "I just know, Lucas, okay?".

"Ok, I believe you."

"Really?"

"I mean, I don't even think *El* knows the extent of her powers."

Mike snickered, "you're probably right."

They rode in silence until they got to the lab.

"Okay, Mike, what's the plan?"

Mike froze. After a few seconds it became clear to Lucas that he didn't have one.

"We can't just march straight in and expect them to let us through the gate. They will know something is up. They will capture us and search for El!"

Mike sighed, saying "I guess I didn't really think this through." Lucas rolled his eyes.

He felt bad the way he treated Eleven. He made her feel like a monster. Lucas would do anything to make it up to her. "What did El tell you in your dream?"

"She just said she was in the Upside Down."

"No." said a voice. The boys turned around. "Hi Mike, hi Lucas." There was a short silence, until El lost it, letting loose tears which had been building up for the past 3 days. Mike looked in shock. They both ran to each other, holding each other. Lucas felt slightly awkward, but Mike pulled back.

"We need to get you home," said Mike. Lucas and Mike hopped on their bikes. Lucas watched as El hopped on Mike's bike and wrapped her arms around him. Lucas felt alone, and almost began to blame El. He silently scolded himself for thinking this way.

He has never seen Mike ride so fast. Lucas had trouble keeping up, despite the fact that Mike had to bike El.

She makes him go faster, he thought.

Nancy

Nancy was in a deep sleep, dreaming about Jonathan. They were having dinner at a nice restaurant. He had a suit on and...

"Nancy!"

She got up and saw Mike shaking her.

"What time is it Mike?"

"El is back, I need your help."

Nancy got up and quickly stepped down two staircases into the basement.

El was sitting quietly on the couch, eating an eggo. She did not look well. There was blood all over Nancy's old dress. Mike was whispering genitally into her ear while she ate.

"Hi El".

El smiled at her.

Nancy noticed a large gash on her right arm, and that side of her dress was significantly more bloody than the other side.

"We should probably clean those cuts."

"That's why I wanted you help," said Mike.

"Why don't we go upstairs, El?"

She got up, and walked upstairs. The back of the dress was by far the most bloody. Nancy ushered her into the bathroom. The younger girl entered.

"Do you mind taking off your dress?" she said as she closed the door.

Nancy turned around. "Just face the window and tell me when it's okay."

In less than a minute El responded, "okay."

Nancy turned around and saw in one second what this poor girl has been through in the past few days. There were cuts all around her body, but there was one that stood out in particular. Nancy began to wipe away the blood.

Nancy stepped back, in horror.

3. Chapter 3

(Author's Note)(writing this after the El section) OMG writing for El is HARD. She is one of my favorite characters in any movie, TV show, or book. She is so original, so badass, and so awesome, all at the same time. I did my best to show this in my writing. :)

I hope you enjoy it!

Nancy

Nancy stood back, in horror. This was no cut or bruise one would get from a fall, nor any type of broken bone, or . What's she was looking at was a bullet wound. The bullet must have skimmed her because she probably wouldn't be alive if it hit any organs.

"MIKE!" she screamed. Mike opened the door and turned away, realizing El had no shirt on.

"Nancy what is it?" he said facing the door.

"Look".

He turned around and saw blood dripping from a long, deep wound on El's side

"Was she *shot*?"

"That's what it looks like."

"Oh my God, oh my God. Those bastards," Mike said. "Does she need to go to the hospital?"

"I don't think so, it only skimmed her."

El drifted out of consciousness. *Probably for the best*, Nancy thought.

"What do you need?"

"Get me medical tape, gauze, and alcohol." Mike ran off with the instructions. Nancy held a towel over the wound to keep the bleeding

down.

Mike was back in less than a minute. He gave her the supplies and left the room again. Nancy grabbed the alcohol and poured some on a new towel and gently rubbed El's side. After about 15 seconds of that she held gauze over the injury, checking it every minute. After 5 minutes she changed the gauze and taped it to El. That should do for tonight, she thought. She covered El in one of Mike's sweatshirts which was much too big for her. Mike helped Nancy carry her upstairs into his room. She told him to sleep downstairs. Nancy washed her hands and plopped herself back in her own bed, resuming her dream about Jonathan.

Eleven

As she woke up, El had felt pain so intense that it almost rivaled the time when she killed the demegorgon. She looked around. She was in Mike's room. Pulled up in a chair was Mike, asleep.

"Mike." He didn't move. "*Mike*." She said a bit louder. Still nothing. "MIKE!" she yelled.

Finally, Mike woke up, and realized El just yelled. "Oh, you're awake. How do you feel?"

"Hurts."

"It's going to hurt for a couple of days, but don't worry, you will be fine." Mike checked the time. 11:52.

"Do you want anything to eat? It looks like we missed breakfast."

El didn't know what breakfast was, but she didn't care. "Yes," she replied.

"I'll be right back."

He closed the door on the way out, leaving her alone in a small room. She opened the door with her mind and pushed it so she can see in the hallway. *Better*, she thought. Mike was back in a few minutes.

"Here, it's called a sandwich. It has turkey and cheese in it. El took a

bite and smiled. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." El ate in silence for a few minutes.

"El?"

She looked up.

"I was wondering if it's okay if the boys come visit you today, if you want to wait a few days I completely understand, even if just one of them comes over, I just feel bad keeping you a secret from the world."

"Can I rest for another day?"

"Of course. I convinced Lucas not to tell anyone by giving him a comic book, I'm just worried that my mom might find you."

"Why?"

"Well if I tell her now, she might make you go to the hospital." He paused, making sure she understood. "And she finds you in the house without me telling her, she might not trust you when things are normal."

It was clear from El's expression that she was confused.

Mike thought about it for a few seconds and stumbled over a few words. Eventually he gave up and said "I don't really know how to explain, I'm sorry."

"It's okay."

"I have the next week off from school so I'll be home. I think Nancy wants to check your wounds at some point today."

El nodded.

There was a moment of silence. "Ok, I'm going to take a shower, I'll be. back in 20 minutes." He got up and started walking towards the door.

"Mike?"

"Yes El?"

"Thanks for saving me".

Mik smiled, and walked out of the room.

She laid back down in Mike's bed, holding the covers close to her. The comfort make the pain somewhat better, but not by much.

About five minutes passed until Nancy walked in.

"Hi El, how are you?"

"Bad," she said.

"You aren't going to like this, but to get better we need to clean your wounds."

"Okay," she said nervously.

"Let's go back into the bathroom."

El walked out of Mike's room and walked towards the downstairs bathroom.

"It might be best to take a shower, then redo your bandages."

El nodded. Nancy helped her take off Mike's sweatshirt she had on. She winced at the pain but didn't say anything.

Nancy started to remove the tape. El began to breath heavily.

"That's good, take deep breaths," said Nancy. "In, and out... in and out."

"This looks a bit better El, its not bleeding". She paused. "Here, I'll show you how to work the shower."

(4 minutes later)

El hopped out of the shower and grabbed a towel. She dries herself,

excluding her laceration. She threw on sweat pants that Nancy left her.

"Nancy?" There was no response. She called a few more times and began to get nervous, until she heard footsteps.

"El, what is it?" Mike said from outside the door.

"Nancy told me to call her after I showered to clean my cut."

"She ran to the store, she should be back in a few minutes." He paused "Nancy probably thought you would have taken a longer shower."

"Can you do it?"

"Uhh..." Mike paused. He seemed nervous.

"Mike?"

"One second." He came back in less than a minute. "I got a shirt, just put it on and I can clean your cuts." He cracked the door and threw the shirt in the room. "Tell me when I can come in."

She put the shirt on slowly. "Okay come in." Mike opened the door and shut it behind him.

"Sorry, I know you don't like being in rooms alone."

"It's okay," El responded.

"Can I lift up yo-"

"Yes," she said, interrupting him.

Mike lifted her shirt a few inches above the wound. It did not look infected, but better safe than sorry. He grabbed a brown bottle of hydrogen peroxide and poured some onto a face cloth. "This is going to sting. A lot."

"It's okay."

Mike gently pressed the towel against her laceration. El breathed in

but didn't pull away. "Sorry." He continued to clean, lightly dabbing her cut until he covered the whole thing twice. "The worst is over." Mike grabbed large gauze pads and taped it onto her body. He pulled her shirt down "All done." Before he had time to react El turned around and hugged him. She felt the bandages constrict her and a sudden flash of pain swept through her body. *Worth it*, she thought.

Mike

After a few seconds of heaven, they pulled away simultaneously as they heard the door open. *Oh no, what will Nancy say.*

"Mike what's wrong?" El said. Mike felt himself blushing, quickly responded "nothing". He smiled at her and walked out of the bathroom and saw Nancy close the door behind her.

"Hi Mike", she said.

"Hey"

"I got the alcohol for El."

"Oh, we had hydrogen peroxide so I used that."

"I guess that's fine." She paused. "Wait you did it yourself?"

"What's the big deal, she had a shirt on."

Nancy smiled "You lied."

"What? She did!"

"No I mean you lied at the school, when you said you didn't like her."

Mike opened his mouth to protest, but he was cut off by Nancy.

"El you look so much better!"

Mike turned around and smiled.

"Thank you," she said happily. "Could I have something to eat?"

They said yes in unison. "Are eggos okay?" Mike asked.

El smiled and nodded eagerly. Mike took 2 out of the box and put them in the toaster. She plopped herself on the couch as Mike and Nancy made food for the three of them.

The eggos were ready in just a few minutes. Mike walked over with the plate for El, and a bottle of syrup.. "El this is maple syrup. You pour it on eggos to make them taste better."

"Even better?" she said with a bright smile, but with her eyebrows raised as if she didn't believe him.

"At least I think so." He poured some on a small section of one of the eggos. "Why don't you try some and decide for yourself," said Mike with a smile. He sat down next to her and dug into his own lunch. Nancy turned on the TV.

El finished her lunch in less than two minutes.

"So? Did you like it."

"I did, but it is sticky". El got up and washed her hands.

When she returned, Mike couldn't help thinking about how amazing she is. *She was shot yesterday, and she just used the word "sticky". It's like nothing happened. Maybe this is what she was used to growing up in a lab. Being alone, neglected and experimented on could have hurt her more than any gun could.*

Mike realized he had been staring, and looked away awkwardly. El didn't seem to notice, or she just didn't care, and moved over a bit right next to Mike. Nancy snickered quietly. When Mike noticed he flipped her off without El noticing. This made Nancy laugh more.

After 15 minutes, Nancy got up. "I'm going over Jonathan's. I'll be home in a few hours. If El needs anything call the Byers" She paused. "Goodbye El and Mike."

"Bye Nancy," Mike said as she walked out the door.

El was wrapped in a blanket on the couch. Mike couldn't resist to hold her closer after Nancy left. El rested her head on Mike's as she fell asleep.

4. Chapter 4

(Three days later)

Eleven

"MOM HOW COULD YOU DO THIS?"

El was in the basement, frightened from all the shouting. They told her to wait downstairs as if she couldn't hear them from there.

"You just expected us to take her in? We don't even have enough room!"

"WHERE ELSE WOULD SHE GO?" El has never heard Mike yell so loud. "I can't believe how heartless you are!" Suddenly the door opened and Mike ran down the stairs. She heard Mike's mother yell his name. "Let's go El."

"Where?"

"Anywhere but here." Mike grabbed a bag and swung it over his shoulder.

El got up and followed him out the door. Mike got on his bike and she hopped on the back. "Mike?"

"My Mom isn't letting you move in," he said as he took off.

El wasn't actually surprised. She has come to accept the fact that people don't accept her. *A freak*. How could she blame them? She tried to count how many people she has hurt or killed and realized she lost count. *I shouldn't have a good life. I don't deserve one.*

"Is it okay if we sleep at one of my friend's house tonight?"

"Yes"

Mike pulled over. "There's a bench over here, it should put us in range of all their houses."

El didn't want Mike to notice that she had been crying. She felt guilty when she noticed he had been too. They walked through the woods, hand in hand, and got to the bench. Mike pulled out his walkie talky from his bag and sat down. El sat down too. She wanted to lean her head on his shoulder but she hesitated; for some reason she thought it made him uncomfortable. When she did it after Mike changed her bandages he was acting strange, and so was Nancy.

"Hello?" Mike said into the radio.

"No, why now," Mike said in frustration. "The red light that normally flashes is out, which means it's out of power."

"So what should we do?"

"The only parent that knows you is Mrs. Byers, I don't think she would mind if we stayed the night there, but she might call my parents."

Mike paused. "I haven't really thought this through, I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry."

Mike faced her and smiled nervously, "I just don't know what to do."

"Why don't we just sleep on the ground?"

Mike snickered, "I don't see why not, it's warm out today." He grabbed his bag and stuck around inside. He pulled out a \$20 bill. "Wow I forgot I had this. We can go get dinner if you want."

"What is that?" El said, gesturing to the bill.

"This is money. People use it to buy things like food and clothes."

El smiled at him, pleased at his explanation.

"So do you want to get dinner?"

"Okay."

"There is an Italian place close by."

"It-al-an?"

"It's means from Italy, a place far away from here, so the restaurant serves food that they often eat."

"I want to try," El said happily.

(A/N: I'm sorry in advanced, I had some writer's block so I added some Mileven fluff because I was getting impatient. I got endless ideas in my head for them but nothing for the plot right now.)

The couple got to the restaurant a few minutes later. El reached out for his hand as they waited to be seated. He took it with a smile on his face.

She suddenly thought about something Nancy said yesterday.

"What is dating, Mike?"

"Umm..." Mike's face turns a dark shade of red and broke eye contact. "Where did you hear this?"

"Nancy asked if you and I were dating, when I asked her what is was she said to talk to you."

Mike's face got even more red. "Uh, well..." he hesitated. "Dating is basically when you spend time with someone as more than friends. It also means that they would be girlfriend and boyfriend."

"Are we dating?"

If Mike's face could get any more red, it did. "Do you want us to be?"

El smiled. "Yes." she noticed the red in his face going away and he smiled.

"Your table is ready, come right this way please."

The waitress led them through the restaurant and sat them at a table for two. They sat down as the waitress handed them menus.

"Want me to explain some of the dishes?"

El nodded with a smile.

"Pasta is good, I think it's made from grains. It usually comes with sauce that makes it taste better." Mike paused, looking for other options, "Ravioli is pretty much pasta with cheese inside it. Pizza is one of my favorite foods. It is bread with cheese and tomato sauce on it."

El paid attention to his explanations, absorbing all the information he threw at her.

"The waitress will be back and ask for drinks, want to try Coke?"

El shook her head. "No."

"Have you had it before?"

El leaned back in her chair and broke eye contact.

"You can tell me, El."

She sighed. "They used Coke to..." She stopped mid-sentence by the waitress walking their way.

"Can I get you any drinks?"

"Water," El said.

"I'll have the same please."

A part of her wondered if he really wanted Coke, and he just ordered water because he could tell she had bad memories of it. A feeling of guilt went across her mind.

The waitress left to get their drinks. *I hope he will change the subject*, she thought. Then El realized she could change the subject herself. "What are you going to get?" El said.

"I'll probably get pizza, you?"

"R-Rav-oli."

Luckily Mike didn't bring up Coke again. She did not want to think

about her childhood right now.

"If you don't like it you can have some of my Pizza."

"Thanks you".

The waitress returned with their drinks and took their orders. Mike laughed quietly when she butchered the pronunciation of "Ravioli."

El looked up and saw a familiar face across the room. "Mike, Dustin is here."

He casually turned his shoulder to look. "Oh no."

"What's wrong?"

"He doesn't know you are back." Mike turned around again and they made eye contact with him. Both his parents were there. Dustin said something to them and walked over.

"Eleven! I'm so glad you are back."

"Me too," she said with a smile.

"How are you? How long have you been back."

"Four days." El considered whether or not to tell him about the gunshot. She realized that Dustin shot Mike a bad look so she explained. "Bad men shot me."

Dustin raised his eyebrows. "Are you ok? They can't getaway with that." There was a short pause. "Are they still looking for you?"

They both looked at her, expecting an answer. "I don't think so."

"That's good news, we should all hang out sometime. Have you met Will yet?"

El shook her head.

"If you are up for it I'll invite everyone over for the night," Dustin said.

El smiled. "Sounds fun."

"Are you sure you are ready?" Mike said.

El nodded.

Dustin noticed his parents staring at him. "I better get going, I'll see you later tonight."

"Bye Dustin," El said.

"See ya," said Mike.

Dustin went back to his family.

"That went better than I expected, I thought he would be mad at us."

"He didn't seem mad."

The waitress came over with their entrees.

El decided that she loved dates and Italian food. Mike let her try some Pizza and she liked it even more than Eggos.

Mike covered the bill with the money he found. El didn't completely understand the concept of money, but she thanked him anyways. They walked out of the restaurant

"Did you like your first date?"

"Yes, we should go again soon," she said happily. There was a long pause of conversation as they were walking towards the bike, but she didn't care. The silence somehow... calmed her.

"We can't go to Dustin's yet because they are still at the restaurant. Maybe we should just go home."

Mike

They biked down the road, speeding by house after house until he got home. Mike couldn't imagine the hell his mother is going to let loose. El and Mike hopped off their bike.

He needed to talk to his mother alone. "I might be grounded. If I am you will have to go to Dustin's house alone."

El frowned. "Grounded?"

"It's something parents do when we do something they think is bad, and you can't leave the house." Mike looked at her, expecting a response. He realized he wasn't going to get one. "So do you mind waiting outside for a few minutes?"

El nodded, but he could tell she was bothered.

"I'm sorry, I'll be back in 5 minutes tops."

Mike opened the door and walked in. He saw his mother walking towards him. "Hi Mom."

She wrapped him in a hug. "I was so worried, I'm sorry."

"You aren't angry?"

"No I'm not angry. I called Joice because I thought you might be there. Mrs. Byers explained everything to me."

"Really? So can El move in?"

Her smile widened slightly. "I suppose we could add an bedroom to the basement."

Mike hugged his mother. "Thank you so much, she is outside if you want to talk to her."

"Bring her in".

Mike opened the door and gestured her in.

"Hello El," Mrs. Wheeler said.

"Hi."

"How would you like to stay downstairs until you are older."

El smiled and nodded vigorously, which made Mrs. Wheeler laugh.

"Would you like anything to eat?"

"We ate dinner at Maria's," Mike said.

"Oh, okay."

"Could we sleep at Dustin's tonight?"

"As long as his parents are ok with it."

"Thanks mom!"

They both ran downstairs, overwhelmed with joy.

They sat down on the couch. "Welcome to your new home," he said, pulling her close. "We can go to school and always be together."

El leaned over and kissed him lightly on the lips.

(A/N) Thanks for reading! Please leave a review if you can. Tell me if you prefer more Mileven fluff or continue with a plot (I was basically ending the plot here, but I might be able to think of more stuff).

5. Chapter 5

(Author's Note) Sorry for this chapter being kind of short, but I didn't want to start anything else. Please leave a review if you can! On another note I was thinking about doing a 1-shot of Brenner, maybe him going through something horrible in WW2 and it changed him. What do you think?

Eleven

El was wrapped in Mike's arms fast asleep on the couch downstairs. Mike, however, was not asleep. He was watching the door to make sure his mother didn't walk in on them. He wanted the two of them to get along.

Tonight they were going to Dustin's. El would finally meet Will.

El groaned quietly and started to move. She looked up at Mike and smiled.

"Hi El," Mike said softly.

"Good morning,"

It was not at all morning, which made Mike laugh. "Are you excited for tonight?"

She leaned away from Mike and nodded. "To meet Will."

"Yeah, when do you want to leave?"

"Now?"

Mike checked his watch. "Sure we can leave now, it's probably just going to be the three of us for a few hours though."

"Should we wait?"

"It's up to you, El."

She considered her decision for a moment. "Let's wait."

"Okay."

El got up and walked upstairs.

"Hello El."

"Hi Mrs. Wheeler," El responded with a smile.

"If you have time before your sleep over then I can take you shopping, if you would like," Karen said.

"Shopping?" El asked quizzically.

"Yes," Mrs Wheeler said, not realizing what El was actually asking.

Mike came up the stairs.

"Mike want to come shopping with El and I."

El noticed he didn't seem happy.

"Okay," he said with a frown.

"We better get going now if you still want to go to Dustin's"

They ended up getting El a few pairs of jeans and sweat pants, some new shirts, and shoes. They got her a winter and spring jacket as well. El had no place to put them, but Karen (She said El could call her that) said she would buy El a dresser soon. El thanked her sincerely and they drove back to their home.

El and Mike showered and changed. They grabbed their sleeping bags, toothbrushes, and a change of clothes and head out to Dustin's on Mike's bike. El wrapped her arms around his waist and rested her head on his back, listening to his heart beat and breathing.

When they got to Dustin's house they got off the bike and walked to the door. They knocked and were let in by Mrs. Henderson.

"Hi Mike," she said happily. "Who's this?"

"I'm El, Dustin's friend."

Mrs. Henderson looked uneasy, but didn't talk about why. "Oh well nice to meet you, Dustin and Lucas are downstairs."

They said thank you and walked downstairs.

"Hi Dustin, hi Lucas," El said with a smile.

"El!" they both yelled, wrapping her in bear hugs. "It's good to see you," said Lucas.

El smiled as they released her. Mike had not said anything yet which was odd.

"Will?" she asked.

"Oh, he couldn't make it, he was feeling sick," Dustin said.

Mike finally said something, "That's too bad, but you can meet Will another time."

"Yes soon". There was a short pause.

"So, want to watch a movie?" Dustin asked.

The other two agreed so she did as well.

"Guys," Mike said. "El has never seen Star Wars!"

"I'll go grab the movie," Dustin said, running up the stairs.

The Hendersons had a TV in their basement, but it was much smaller than the one at Mike's house.

The basement had an "L" shaped couch. Mike and El sat towards the bend, snuggling while watching the movie. When they first laid down together she heard some snickers coming from Dustin and Lucas, but she didn't care. El loved being this close to him. Mike gave her some explanations throughout the film.

She ended up loving the movie; they watched Episode 4. She was confused why they didn't start with 1, but they said it hadn't come out yet, which only confused El more.

They all took turns brushing teeth and, afterwards, set up their sleeping bags.

They laid in their sleeping bags and talked for almost an hour. By that point it was almost one in the morning, so they decided to go to bed. They all said their goodnights and, in less than a minute, El was out like a light.

El was back in the lab, alone in her room. She was lying in her old bed, beginning to hyperventilate. The door opened, and it was Mike.

"El are you ok?"

"Yes." Her breathing calmed down slightly.

"I almost forget about our dream." He stared at her, expecting a response. *What does he want from me?* She began to get frustrated. "Are you okay?" She didn't know what to say. If she said "yes" she would be lying.

Then El realized he has never seen the lab, he might not even know where he is.

"This was my room." She got out of bed and looked at the drawing she made months ago. She took it off the wall. Mike walked over and looked at it.

"Papa let me color one day when I was good."

El looked down at the drawing, remembering what they made her do, what they did to her all her life. She took another look at it and tore it into pieces. A tear came down her cheek.

When she looked up she realized Mike was gone, and the dream was fading away.

El woke up breathing heavily. It was pitch black in Dustin's basement.

"El?" said a familiar voice.

"Mike?"

"Are you ok?"

El wanted to say yes, but she remembered what Mike had said to her almost 2 weeks ago. *Friends don't lie.*

"No."

Mike quietly rolled over a few times in his sleeping bag so he was next to her. "What they did to you was horrible. I won't let them take you away, not ever. You are safe now."

El smiled, wishing this moment could last forever. Despite it being dark inside, she gazed into his eyes. She could have sworn that there was a glimpse of light in each pupil. "Stay with me?"

"Of course El, always."

6. Chapter 6

(Author's Note) Sorry this chapter is a bit dull. Please read a review about what you thought!

(One Week Later)

Mike (Sorry if this makes you cringe)

Tomorrow was the snow ball, and at the moment instead of studying Mike was hyperventilating. He wanted El to enjoy herself, and how was he going to do that? Mike desperately tried to explain what dancing was, but he ended up just confusing her more. Then he thought of a solution. The only solution: Show her what dancing is. He got up and closed his books. *It's El, she won't judge you*, he thought to himself to give him some confidence.

Mike walked downstairs, saying hi to his mother, to whom he had to lie about being done with his homework, and knocked on the basement doors.

"Come in."

Mike opened the door and walked into the basement. El was in her bed reading a book, it seemed like she always was. "Hi El."

"Hi Mike."

"Are you excited for the Snowball tomorrow?"

She nodded her head rather aggressively, which made Mike laugh.

"I know that you don't really understand what dancing is, so I'd thought I'd give you a demonstration," Mike said with a smile.

Mike turned on *Tainted Love* and started to move to the music, just moving his hips and head at first. El smiled at him. He hoped he wasn't blushing too much. The song continued and he got more into it. In less than a minute he had the courage to extend a hand to El, an invitation to join him.

El got out of bed and took his hand. she tried to mimic his movements and seemed to do it perfectly. As the song changed he realized El would need some guidance.

"Normally people slow dance to this kind of music," he said with a smile. His smile faded away when he realized where he would put his hand. Mike turned off the music.

"Mike?"

"El how is your wound?"

"It doesn't hurt much."

"Well if you touch then does it hurt?"

She shook her head no, but something was off about her.

"Okay". Mike turned the music back on. "So...I place my hand here, just tell me if it hurts and we can stop." He put his hand on the side of her stomach. "And you put your hand on my shoulder, and we dance face to face."

El did what he said and smiled.

They moved to the music, El smiling the entire time. The song ended and Mike didn't start another one.

"I wish I could dance some more, but I have homework to do."

"Okay," she said, clearly unhappy.

Mike was about to walk up the stairs but El put her hand on his shoulder. He turned around to face her. "El wh-" he was interrupted by El kissing him. She wrapped her arms around his neck for a few seconds, then pulled away. Mike stood there in shock, not sure what to say or do. Surprisingly enough, El did.

"Thanks you," she said. Mike smiled at her and walked upstairs.

Eleven

El couldn't sleep. The excitement of the Snowball was too much for her to calm down. *No point in trying*, she thought. El hopped out of bed and looked at her book shelf. El finished all the books they gave her. When she asked for more Karen suggested trying Mike's textbooks. She pulled out Mike's pre-algebra book and flipped open to the review section. Mike had to explain to her the basics: multiplication, division, adding, subtraction, but doing the review section would get her to the next step for math.

After about an hour of practice there was a noise on El's new walkie talky, a gift from Mike. She didn't hear anything for a few seconds, so she figured it was nothing. She went back to her work, but as soon as El resumed her problem, she heard it again; this time it was more clear.

"Hello?"

It wasn't Mike. El took the device held it up to her mouth.

"Who's there? Over."

"Oh hi El, it's Lucas, over."

"Hello Lucas, over."

"Did I wake you up? Over."

El closed her books and put them on her nightstand. She hopped into her bed and wrapped herself under the warm blankets.

"No I couldn't sleep because of the Snowball, are you going? Over," El said.

"To the Snowball? No I couldn't find a date, over"

"Why? Over."

"Uh, well..." There was a slightly awkward pause.

"Lucas? Over."

He sighed. "Well, sometimes it's hard to ask a girl out on a date,

over."

"When Mike asked me he seemed uncomfortable, over."

"I'm sure he was. Think about it, if you said no, Mike would be devastated, that is why it is hard."

"Why would anyone say no?"

"Well sometimes people don't think of each other as more than friends, like us. But sometimes they say no to be mean, and to embarrass you, over."

Suddenly another voice came through the speaker. "Hello?"

"Hi Mike, over," El said.

"I'll leave you two alone, see ya Mileven, over and out," Lucas said humorously. There was a few seconds of silence. El figured that Lucas probably wanted to talk to Mike, but if it was important Lucas would have said that. El's thoughts shifted from Lucas to Will. Will Byers: that's strange small boy she met a few days ago. He seemed uncomfortable, awkward, but nice. El suddenly realized it was probably her that made him uncomfortable, which turned her thoughts into guilt.

"Couldn't sleep? over," Mike said with a yawn.

"No, I was working on math. Over."

"Want me to come down? Over."

"If you want to. Over."

"I'll be right there, over and out."

El heard Mike trying to be quiet but failing miserably. The stairs creaked, the doors squeaked, and his loud footsteps made a considerable amount of noise. *It's a good thing Karen is a heavy sleeper*, El thought.

When Mike finally got down, she noticed how tired he was.

"What time is it?" El asked.

"2:44," he said checking his watch.

"Sorry."

"It's okay, I was the one who offered," Mike said as he smiled at her.

"Is there something wrong?" Mike looked like he had been crying. His eyes were red and it looked like there were tear stains.

"I just had a bad dream."

"Want to talk about it?" El said.

Mike shook his head. El knew better than to push him, so she didn't ask again. A few days ago she insisted on him telling her about a fight he had with Nancy, but Mike got angry, almost as if the anger was redirected towards El.

El realized he was still standing up, rather awkwardly. "Mike?" she said, holding up the blankets so he could get in.

"I'm not sure if that's a good idea."

El looked at him quizzically.

"If my parents walk in th-."

"They will be just as mad if we are up," El said cutting him off. She lifted up the covers again. "Get in or do I have to make you get in?"

Mike laughed. "That won't be necessary."

He carefully got in bed with her. He wrapped his arm around her shoulders.

"I'm sorry, it's just-" he paused. "We shouldn't act like we are dating in front of Nancy and my Mom."

"Why?"

"Well for a start, Nancy is blackmailing me, it means that she is

forcing me to do stuff or she will tell my mom about us."

"Is that what your fight was about?"

"Yes, and sorry for getting mad, it was just my mother was watching us. She would make it her life goal to keep us separated if she knew we were together. I can't let her get any more suspicious than she already is."

El didn't understand why Karen would do that, she seemed nice. El was too tired to ask though. Between the comfort of Mike's warmth and his soothing voice she was able to finally fall asleep...

El was in a dark place. She could walk around, move and speak freely, but nothing was there. *Mike must not be asleep*, she thought. El began to get frightened. It reminded her of the tank, the first time she saw the monster.

After turning around in circles for almost a minute desperately trying to see someone, she spotted a figure in the distance. El approached it with caution. When she could finally see what it was she screamed. It was Benny, his eyes gone with blood dripping from a hole in his head.

El woke up to Mike shaking her.

"El what is it? Are you ok?"

She felt tears come from her eyes. "It's my fault, she said. He wasn't a bad man."

Mike held El and tried to calm her down. "It was just a dream, you didn't do anything wrong."

El pulled away. She explained Benny to him, the first person she ever met out of the lab. She told him what they did to him.

"El how is it your fault? You never asked to be put in a lab and you certainly didn't pull the trigger. It's terrible I know, but you can't blame yourself."

El's tears stopped, and her breathing slowed down. She held Mike

close. After a few minutes Mike decided to end the comfortable silence.

"I'm so happy I found you," he said and kissed her head.

"Me too."

And with that in her mind, El fell asleep, this time dreaming of her new life.

El was woken up by Mike desperately trying to sneak up the stairs quietly. But with every step came a loud creak.

"You are very loud," she said. "What time is it?"

"5:30, I have to go back before my parents get up," Mike paused. "Sorry."

"It's okay."

"Goodnight El."

"Night Mike."

Mike

Mike woke up from pleasant dreams to his mother staring at him.

"Have a good night sleep?" she said suspiciously.

"Umm..." *She knows.*

"Come on get up, it may be a short day but you still have to go."

The reminder that it was a short day made his morning slightly better. They wouldn't be doing much work anyways because the whole school would be distracted by the Snowball.

Mike finally got out of bed and took a quick shower. He threw clothes on, ate breakfast, and biked to school.

He was distracted the entire day. He had a test in math, who the teacher had assigned it just to prove a point about how you still have

to work on the day of the dance. He had it first period so he got it over with early. However, after that Mike's mind wandered to other thoughts: dancing, music, and friends.

Oh and El.

El seemed to never leave his mind. All he could think about was being with her. His grades have dropped 5 points or more in each class due to his new distraction.

Bells rang, classes went by and a bully or two were avoided, and somehow Mike managed to make it home alive. He still had about four hours until he had to get ready for the dance, and his parents were still at work.

A month ago he would have called his friends, but now he would rather be with someone else.

Mike knocked on El's door, thinking of something to do until the dance.

"Come in."

Mike opened the door and made his way down the stairs. "Hi El!" he said happily.

"Hi Mike," she replied. El was reading a *To Kill a Mockingbird* in her bed. She started it this morning and was already halfway through.

"Are you excited for the Snowball tonight?"

"Yes," she said with a wide smile. "I went shopping with Nancy and got a dress."

"I can't wait to see it," Mike said. "How do you like the book?"

"Why is everyone so poor? Is it always like this?"

"No, thank God. It takes place in the 1930s about 50 years ago. That was the most poor decade in America. It's called the Great Depression."

El nodded to show that she understood.

"Do you want anything to eat?"

"Yes." El hopped up and walked upstairs, Mike followed her up.

Mike popped 4 eggos in the toaster.

"TV?" El asked.

"Sure."

They watched television as they waited for the eggos to cook. The toaster eventually finished the eggos; Mike got their lunch.

Mike tried to make small talk with El, but she was so concentrated on her meal that he gave up.

They finished their meals quickly. Mike cleaned their plates and returned to the couch. He looked at her and realized that she must not have slept much last night, nor did he. There were dark circles under her eyes, which were barely open. Mike tried not to think how bad he must look, only sleeping a few hours.

"I think we are both tired, want to get some rest before the dance?"

El snuggled close to him, resting her head on his shoulder. *This isn't what I ment*, he thought, but at all disappointed. He wrapped his arm around her and fell asleep.

7. Chapter 7

(Author's Note) Thanks for reading! Please leave a review if you can in any suggestions, critiques, or thoughts you have on the chapter.

Eleven

"El... El come on we need to get up."

El opened her eyes and saw Mike staring at her.

"Hi Mike," she said with a yawn.

"Hi, are you really for the Snowball?"

"How much longer?"

"We should leave in about 30 minutes."

"I'll go change." El hopped downstairs and undressed. She put on her red dress. She put on mascara and lipstick and walked upstairs. El has had trouble telling time, she didn't know if she was going to be late.

El ran upstairs. "Mike?" She walked around the house. "Mike," she said, yelling this time.

"El I'm in the shower."

El walked upstairs and tried to open the bathroom door. It was locked, but that didn't stop her. She concentrated and reached out. El heard a clicking noise as a small flash of pain went across her mind. She opened the door.

"El what are you doing in hear! I'm in the shower," Mike said.

"Do we need to leave soon?"

"We still have about 15 minutes El."

"Okay." El realized that she made Mike uncomfortable, and felt guilty. "Sorry."

"It's okay. I'm almost done, so could I have some privacy?"

"Yes," El said. She walked out of the bathroom and closed the door. As she walked down the stairs she tried to think of something to do.

El got out Mike's textbook. She was on the coordinate plane. *Easy*, she thought. This book, however, had taken much longer to read than all the other books combined. There were hundreds of practice problems that she completed. El wanted to start school fast, and these textbooks took forever. Mike told her that they skipped many of the chapters because they were taught the subjects in previous years. She completed 17 problems until Mike came down.

He was wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and red tie. Nancy arranged it so that his tie matched her dress.

"You look pretty," El said.

Mike stundered over some words and his face got red.

"Are you ok?" El asked.

Mike took a deep breath. "Yeah I'm great, you look beautiful, El."

She smiled at the complement and took his hand.

"Are you ready?" he said.

El nodded and they walked out the door.

The couple hopped on Mike's bike and took off towards the school. El had to be careful of her dress getting caught in the tires. They got to the school in less than 10 minutes.

Mike and El met up with Will and his new girlfriend Jennifer Hayes.

"Hey Mileven," Will said.

"Hey Will and Jennifer" Mike said. He began to accept the nickname for them. Even Mike wouldn't deny they were always together.

"El this is Jennifer Hayes. Jennifer, El," El thought about how

everyone had 2 names but her, and no one she met had a number as a name. Jen was wearing a light blue dress with matching shoes. *Pretty*, El thought.

"Nice to meet you," Jen said.

"You too," replied El.

There was a short pause. "So, should we go eat?" Mike said.

"Sure!" Jen said.

The food was delicious. They served chicken parmesan and spaghetti as the main dish and salad on the side. El loved the salad with the creamy dressing they put on.

"I'm going to the bathroom," Mike said.

This left El alone on one side of the 4-person table.

Suddenly a boy El recognized came up to her.

"Hi, what's your name?" the boy asked.

"El."

"That's pretty, I'm Troy."

El has heard the name before. She remembered who he was. *Mouth breather*, she thought. Will and Jen were discreetly shaking their heads at her.

"Want to dance?"

El shook her head, but she wanted to make sure he would stay away. "How's your arm?" El said. Troy's wound has healed and he had no cast on.

"How did y-. It's you," Troy said in disbelief.

"Leave now."

Troy walked away "Freak," he muttered. El pushed him with her

mind and he fell on his face. He got up and quickly walked away.

"That was awesome, El," Will said.

Jen had a confused look on her face, which was understandable.

"I broke his arm a few weeks ago," El explained. "He must not have recognized me."

Jennifer looked at her in a strange manner, then decided to change the subject. "So, how did you and Mike meet?"

"He found me the night after Will went missing in the rain," El answered.

Jen acted as if that was a normal way for a couple to meet and looked at Will. "Am I ever going to get an explanation of that?"

Will shook his head and stood up to go the bathroom, which just left the two girls alone. El tried to end the uncomfortable silence. "I don't know what is taking Mike so long."

"They are probably talking about us in there," Jen said while laughing.

"What do you think about?"

"Oh I don't know, guy things."

El smiled at her.

"Where do you go to school?" Jen asked.

"I was hoping to start here soon."

"Oh cool, maybe we will have some classes together."

Mike and Will started walking over. When they got to the table the two boys extended a hand to their dates and invited them to dance. El took Mike's, but Jen refused.

"Not until you tell me what happened."

"Jen please, can't this wait unt-"

"No!" she said cutting Will off.

He sighed. "Fine, as long as El is okay with it."

El nodded to Will. "Mike, let's go dance."

Will (So I was considering cutting this section, but I thought introducing another character would make things interesting and she would have to be filled in eventually).

"The reason I didn't want to tell you was because, to be honest, I don't think you would believe me, not because I didn't want to tell you. Promise you will believe me and you won't tell anyone."

"Okay I promise," Jen said.

"So El's real name is Eleven. She grew up in the lab near my house and did experiments on her. She has... powers. She used them on Troy to break his arm, and to make his fall, but Dustin told me that she can do a lot more than that. The people at the lab tested her to her breaking point and she opened a portal to another dimension we call the Upside Down. A monster got loose from the portal and abducted me. I hid there for a week." He paused to see her reaction to that last part.

"You can stop if you want, I'm sorry."

"I mine as well finish. El used her powers to locate me, and my mom and Chief Hopper got me home. Then El killed the monster and was transported to the Upside Down in the process. There she escaped through the lab, and..." Will paused. "I think that's it." He thought for a second. "Oh yeah, El was shot when she escaped, and while I was trapped bad men were searching for her, but we think they gave up now."

"Are you serious?"

"Yes."

"Do you want to talk about it more?"

"I don't really care. Being trapped there made me realize that I needed to be myself, because that entire time I thought I was going to die, I would have died if my mother was a half hour late. Why pretend to be someone else when life is so short?"

"What was with the funeral?"

"The lab made a fake body and said I fell into a quarry. They assumed I would die and they wanted to cover their mistakes."

"I can't imagine what you have been through," Jen said as she took his hand.

"What happened to me wasn't too bad compared to El. She has told us a few stories about the lab. They treated her terribly for 12 years."

"So she doesn't go to school?"

"No, but Mike told me that she is studying hard to catch up." There was a slightly awkward pause in the conversation. "Ready to dance?"

Jen looked up and smiled at him. She took his hand and walked into the gymnasium.

Eleven

El and Mike entered the gym together. They found an area where they could dance without much disturbance from other students. El didn't recognize the song playing, but she liked it so far. It was a fast song, so she tried some of the moves that Mike showed her. She felt ridiculous, but with Mike doing the same thing in front of her she had the confidence to be herself.

They danced for a half an hour and decided to take a break.

El and Mike went out of the gym and walked into the cafeteria. They got waters and sat down at an empty table. Mike talked to her about the music they were playing, which songs and artists were his favorite, and what he hoped they would play. Sadly El did not have much to contribute to the conversation, and she could tell Mike was struggling to keep the conversation going. A feeling of guilt went through her. He suddenly changed the subject.

"How do you like Jennifer?" Mike asked.

"She seems nice."

"Yeah she's funny too, it's good that Will found someone. Dustin and Lucas seem kind of down."

"Why?"

"Well Lucas was turned down by a girl. She was nice about it, but it was still hard on him."

"Why did she say no?"

"She was asked out by someone else."

A few more minutes went by until they decided to head back to the gym.

They danced to song after song, each one seeming to be slower and slower.

(A/N The song came out in 84, close enough, and tbh the line fits them great, and I don't know much 80s slow music anyways)

Suddenly the song changed. El put her hand on Mike's shoulder and he put his on her waist. El listened to the music carefully.

...The second hand unwinds.

If you're lost, you can look, and you will find me, time after time.

El suddenly did not want to dance.

She wanted to press her lips against his. El didn't know what it was called, but she knew what it ment. She knew the feeling. She knew she wanted it.

El leaned forward towards him. Mike leaned slightly forward as well. With all the courage she could find in herself, El wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him.

El lost track of time. Even if she didn't, El would have no idea when

to pull away. She didn't care though. All she wanted to do was enjoy the moment, as long as it may last.

El unwrapped her arms from his neck. *Mike will know*, she thought. After a few seconds passed Mike pulled away.

"Wow," El managed to say.

Mike smiled at her and blushed. The song ended, and the DJ announced that the dance was over. "Want to find Will and Jennifer?

"Sure."

After several painful minutes of pushing through crowds while yelling their names, they finally found the other couple.

"How do you like dancing El?" Will asked.

"Fun," she said while glancing at Mike.

"We can all sleep at my place tonight," Mike said.

El looked over at Jennifer who had been staring at her the whole time. She quickly glanced away. *Weird*, El thought.

"Fine with me, what about you Jen?" Will said.

"What?" Jennifer asked quizzically.

"Want to sleep at Mike's?"

"Oh," she looked over at El before responding. "Sure."

The two couples went home on their bikes. Jennifer had her own bike, which made El a bit uncomfortable, but pushed the thought aside, holding Mike a little tighter.

They got to their house. El check the time: 10:44.

"Want to play Truth or Dare? Will asked.

Mike turned to El. "It's a game where you need to answer a question or do something, then you ask someone else."

"Sounds fun," El said. She didn't actually mean that, but she wanted to try it.

"It will be weird with 4 people, but why not," Jen said.

They sat in the basement away from Eleven's bedroom.

"I guess I'll go first," Mike said. "Will, Truth or Dare?"

"Truth."

"Who was your first kiss?"

Will sighed, "Come on you know the answer you just want to embarrass me."

"Say it!"

"Jennifer."

Jen and Mike laughed a bit. Will rolled his eyes and continued the game.

"El Truth or Dare?"

"Truth."

"Have you and Mike slept together," Will asked.

"Yes, many times," El answered.

Mike's face got dark red and clarified. "No El we hav- well we have but it's not what you two think you perverts!" he said to Jes and Will who were laughing.

El was very confused.

"Mike Truth or Dare."

"Truth"

"You are all sissies going Truth!" Jes said.

"What was Will really asking me?"

Jes and Will burst out laughing. Mike put his face in his hands.

"Can I please explain it tomorrow when we are alone?" Mike said.

"Fine," El said.

"Thanks you."

Luckily for Mike Will didn't push him.

They played Truth or Dare for another 15 minutes and decided to call it a night since they ran out of stuff to ask.

El got out extra sleeping bags for their guests. They all took showers; Mike and El offered Will and Jen some clothes so they didn't have to sleep in their dress clothes. They all laid down in a circle and talked for another hour. Mike was the first to fall asleep. Soon after Will passed out. This just left El and Jennifer alone. El noticed that she had been looking at her differently all night since Will explained everything to her.

"Is something wrong?" El asked.

"No, why?"

"You have been looking at me weird all night."

"Sorry," Jen said.

"It's okay."

There was a slightly awkward pause in conversation.

"I'm assuming Will told you about me."

"Yes... you have... powers?" Jen said.

" Yes."

There was a short pause. "What is it like?"

El opened your mouth to answer but was interrupted.

"Sorry, you don't need to answer that."

"It's okay I will." El thought for a few seconds. "It hurts." El looked at the ground. "I don't care about the pain, but whenever I use then it hurts other people, much more than me."

"I'm sorry."

"It's okay, just when people talk about my powers I remember my old life, and I don't like to think about it."

"I won't bring them up again, I'm sorry."

El began to hear heavy breathing. She looked towards Jen, whose eyes were closed. El's eyes began to get heavy. Before she knew it, El was asleep as well.

8. Chapter 8

(Author's Note) Thanks for reading! Please review if you have a moment, it would mean a lot to me; I work hard on these chapters!

Saturday *morning after the Snowball*

Mike

Mike woke up in his sleeping bag with pain in his arm; he fell asleep in an awkward position. He looked around at his friends, noticing El's bag was empty, and Will and Jen were still asleep. Mike got up and walked upstairs. El was reading his math textbook at the kitchen table.

"Morning," Mike said.

"Good morning," El said, not even looking up.

Mike noticed how few pages she had left. "What chapter are you on?"

"34, the last one."

"El you are months ahead of us!"

"Good," she said. El finally looked up and smiled. She had dark circles under her eyes and she looked somewhat pale.

"How long have you been up?"

"Since 3," El said.

"Couldn't sleep?"

"I got 3 or 4 hours."

"Promise me you will try to sleep some more? It's not healthy."

El sighed. "Ok, I promise."

Mike made 4 eggos and sat down next to her, giving her a plate with 2 of them. He put some syrup on and started to eat. Mike checked in

on her a few times to make sure she was eating. El had strange eating habits; she never got anything herself, whether she was hungry or not. Mike never heard her complain once, which, for many boys would be a good thing, but not for him. El needed to eat. Whether it was her time in the Upside Down, her gunshot wound, or the malnutrition at the lab, El was not healthy. It turns out, El was eating, but she didn't stop working away at the textbook.

Around the time Mike finished his breakfast she spoke. "On the last section."

"That's great El," Mike said sincerely. He gave her a kiss on the cheek and went upstairs to brush his teeth. He put on jeans and a t-shirt and went downstairs. Will and Jen were at the table talking to each other, El was still working hard and was clearly having trouble concentrating. She gave up and whispered something in frustration to herself while closing the textbook.

Jen and Will left around 11. El finished the textbook in less than a half-hour after they left. Mike's father was working the weekend and his mother was out shopping. That just left El, Mike, and Nancy in the house. His sister stayed in her room doing God knows what, and El and Mike stayed on the first floor, relaxing on the couch. El was reading and tuning out the TV which Mike was watching. Mike was enjoying the stress-free afternoon.

Suddenly, El must have decided he deserved some stress. "Mike what was Will really asking me last night?" she asked.

Mike felt his face get red. "Umm. uh..."

El stared at him, waiting patiently for an answer.

El will learn eventually, nothing wrong with you saying it, Mike thought to himself as he took a deep breath. "So, um," Mike thought of the stereotypical answer. "When a man loves a woman, usually what happened is they have sex, that's what Will was asking." Mike purposely left out the meaning of sex, despite him knowing that El wouldn't have any idea what that meant. He took the slight chance that El wouldn't ask what sex is. For Mike, luck wasn't on his side today.

"What's sex?" El asked.

Mike decided that it would be best to rip off the leech and try to get this all over with so she wouldn't ask any questions later, especially if there were people around. "So girls and guys have slightly different bodies. Guys have penises and girls have vaginas. When people have sex they put the penis in the vagina, and sometimes a baby is made."

"Any you do this with someone you like more than a friend?"

Mike realized where this conversation was going. Mike certainly had thought about El in that way being the 13 year old boy that he was, but he would never push her or ask her without her having a complete understanding first, and not until they were a bit older.

"Yes," Mike answered. He tried to think of a way of explaining it better, but El had another question.

"What is love?" El asked. Still not the easiest thing to explain, but he was happy that they moved on from the last subject.

"Love, I guess, is when you like someone more than a friend, but you always want to be with them, and..." he stopped. Mike didn't know how to explain any better. "There is no real way to explain love well, I'm sorry."

"It's okay."

Mike thought of a way to explain. "Love is what I feel for you."

El looked at him and smiled. "I love you too."

Mike wrapped his arm around her and placed a kiss on her head. El put her book down and rested her head on his shoulder. In less than a minute she was out. Mike enjoyed the moment, not even paying attention to the TV.

Mike watched TV for another 15 minutes until he heard Nancy come down the stairs. El was still asleep on his shoulder. He couldn't wake her, she needed the sleep. Nancy got to the bottom of the stairs and laughed. Mike flipped his sister off.

"Mom's going to be home soon, just letting you know."

"So?" Mike said quietly.

"Do you really want her to see you two like that?" Nancy asked rhetorically.

Mike sighed. "Do you really think she doesn't know?"

"Of course Mom knows you like El, everything you do, you do for her. Don't act like it's not obvious, but she doesn't know you 2 are dating. El is much more discreet than you are and she isn't even trying," Nancy said with a smile.

Mike flipped her off again.

"Hey, I was just being honest."

Mike felt El move on his shoulder. She made a quiet moan and lifted her head.

"Hi Mike, Hi Nancy," El said.

"Hi El, how are you?" Nancy said. Despite her constant nagging and a bit of blackmail on the side, Nancy did make an effort to get along with El, which Mike was thankful for.

"Good."

"Want anything to eat?"

"No thanks", El said.

"We had a late breakfast," Mike explained.

"Okay," Nancy said. She walked towards the kitchen to make herself something.

El looked towards Mike. "Do you have any other textbooks?" she asked.

"You can read my biology book. I don't think it's as long."

"What's biology?"

"It's the study of life. It will probably be easier for you than math, I'll go get it." Mike got off the couch and went to his room to get the book. He brought it to the first floor and handed it to El.

"If you have any questions feel free to ask."

"Thank you."

"Once you get to chapter 14 I think you are ready." Suddenly, Mike thought of something. He checked to make sure Nancy was out of earshot. "You may also want to read through the reproductive system chapter towards the back."

"Okay, thanks Mike," El said as she opened the book and started from page one.

Eleven

Fifty pages into biology later, El was interrupted by Karen sitting down across the table from her.

"Hi El!" she said happily.

"Hello Karen."

"El I have great news, Chief Hopper was able to pull some strings and you are now an official U.S. citizen! That means you can go to school just like the boys!"

El smiled in disbelief, "really?"

"Yes, you can start school once you are all caught up."

"I'm so excited!" El said.

Karen gave her a hug. "Now, since things are starting to settle down, I want to set up some ground rules."

"Ground rules?"

"Yes, things you can and can not do."

El nodded a bit nervously.

"First of all, I know you aren't going to like this, but Mike and you can't spend time together until all your homework is done on week days."

"But-"

"No buts!" Karen said sternly.

El frowned and looked towards the ground.

"I'm sorry, but you both need a great education, how would you like to be a lawyer or doctor?"

El didn't know what either of those were but they sounded exciting, so she nodded.

"So you need to study hard, and you will be successful."

"Okay," El responded.

"Also, no powers in the house and, unless you have extra homework, you need to go to bed no later than 10."

El didn't like those peticularly either, but the first rule was by far the worst.

"That's not so bad, right?"

"I guess not."

"Great. We are all going out to dinner tonight, be ready by 5:30, and put on something nice!"

"Okay."

Karen got up and walked away. El went back to her studying.

5:20 P.M.

(authors note: Not really sure how to describe dresses, just ignore it if it doesn't make much sense. I don't think belt is the correct word I

was looking for).

El closed the book, satisfied with the progress she was making. She went downstairs to her room and changes into a new dress Nancy and her bought. It was light blue and went down to her knees. She fastened the belt that came with it around her lower stomach, not feeling any pain when it touched her old wound.

El walked upstairs in her new clothes. Nancy, Karen and Ted were sitting on the couch chatting. Ted was less friendly than Karen and Nancy, but he didn't seem mean. They turned to her.

"El you look great!" Nancy said.

"Thanks, you too."

Nancy laughed and walked over to her.

"I heard the news, do you know when you are starting school?"

"Next week maybe?" El said hesitantly.

"That's great!"

There were loud footsteps on the stairs. She turned around and saw Mike.

"Hi El," Mike said. He opened his mouth to speak again but his father interrupted him.

"Ready to go?" he said.

They all got in the car and took off to eat, the three kids in the back with Mike in the center.

"Where are we going?" Mike asked.

"Maria's," Karen said.

Mike grinned and looked at El. He leaned over to her. "Remember Maria's? We ate there a few days after you were back," Mike whispered.

El nodded and smiled at the memory. She took his hand, but tried to keep it discreet. El remembered that Karen wouldn't like it if she knew they were dating.

They got to the restaurant and sat down at a booth. Nancy was on the end, Karen and Ted were on one side, and Mike and El were on the other. The waiter came to order their drinks. Karen ordered a drink El didn't recognize called wine. Nancy, Mike, and El ordered waters, and Ted ordered Coke.

When Ted said the drink Mike looked towards El. "Are you okay?" he said quietly. El remembered her first date, how Mike wanted to know what was wrong. She didn't mind telling Mike, but telling 4 people at once would make her incredibly uncomfortable.

"Later," El said, hoping Mike wouldn't push her in front of people. El thought that she didn't want to explain it at all, even if it was just Mike. El thought about all the questions she asks him, and how some of them make Mike uncomfortable. She wondered if this is what he felt, and El felt a bit guilty.

"Everything okay?" Karen asked.

"Yes," Mike responded quickly.

Karen tried to make conversation with her son and daughter, but El, to the surprise to everyone, seemed to be doing most of the talking. With her reading so often, El's vocabulary had increased substantially, along with her confidence and trust of her new family.

When the waiter brought their drinks she did her best to ignore the memory that kept popping into her head. Her efforts ended up being wasted.

El remembered how much it hurt. They asked her to move things, listen to things in other rooms, but never crush anything. The pain was substantially more than anything El felt before. She looked up and saw Papa smiling at her.

"El?"

She came back into the current moment.

"El?" Karen said.

"Yes?"

"Is something bothering you?" she asked.

El shook her head and took a sip of water.

The waiter took their orders, El ordering ravioli. Mike and Nancy ordered Pizza, and their parents ordered a dish with egg plant in it. El thought eggs came from chickens, but she didn't ask why they were called plants.

The meals came in a few minutes. El realized how hungry she was, not eating any lunch. El dug into her meal using her fork.

"El be careful of your dress!" Nancy said.

El realized that if she got any of the sauce on her dress it might not come out. El nodded to show she understood and went back to eating, a bit slower this time.

After Ted paid they all thanked him and left the restaurant. They got in the car and headed home.

"You can invite some friends over for the night if you want. Just make sure they eat at home," Karen said as they walked inside.

Mike and El went downstairs to see if their friends were free. Dustin, Will, Lucas, and Jen all were over in less than an hour. It was still early - around 8.

El told this to Karen beforehand, who seemed uneasy, muttering something about girls and boys under her breath.

They all hung out in the basement, away from El's room. They talked about classes, teachers, and bullies.

"Mrs. Campbell has been ridiculous!" Jen said.

"I know, 4 chapters in one night?" Dustin said.

El thought that 4 chapters wasn't that much, but she remembered that some chapters were much longer than others.

"What book?" El asked.

"It's called *The Cay*, you can borrow my copy if you want to read it," Mike said.

El nodded.

"Anyways," Jen started. "How has bio been?"

All the boys had Mr. Clark. They all smiled. "It's Mr. Clark, he is awesome." Lucas said.

"Yeah, it sucks you are stuck with Mr. Smith," Will added.

"He isn't that bad, it's just the class; I'm the only one who listens," Jen said.

El began to fade out the conversation, not understanding much of it. She felt a bit left out, but since El could start school soon she knew that would end afterwards.

The boys put on Star Wars Episode V. on the TV upstairs. Jen didn't seem peticularly excited, but Mike, Dustin, and Lucas kept complaining that she has never seen it so how would she know it is bad. Will didn't seem very talkative on this subject.

In less than 10 minutes Jennifer was asleep. El heard several sighs.

"I don't understand! It's the best movie ever!"

El didn't see why they liked it so much. Jedi can move stuff with their mind. *Big deal*, El thought.

"I don't think they are that good," El said. She hasn't seen many movies, maybe she just doesn't like them in general.

"Well, that's because you're a Jedi!" Dustin said with a wide smile.

El shrugged and kept watching the movie.

Jennifer

Jennifer woke up to Will whispering for her to get up. She pretended to be asleep, keeping her eyes shut, curious about what they would say.

"I never knew how heavy a sleeper she was," Will said to his friends.

"Well she probably wants to change and brush before going to bed, I would wake her up," Mike said.

Will shook her a bit more roughly this time. She pretended to wake up. "Hey Will," she said.

"Hey, we're going to go downstairs and talk before bed," Will explained.

"Okay."

Jennifer got up and grabbed her change of clothes. She changed from her jeans into sweatpants and brushed her teeth.

She went to the basement and set up her sleeping bag with her friends.

They talked as a group for around an hour. El brought down snacks for everyone. Will was the first to pass out, along with Dustin, Mike, and Lucas.

"Deja Vu," Jen said to El with a smile.

"What?"

"Last night. We were the last ones up."

"Oh," El said.

There was an awkward pause, so Jen brought up another subject.

"When you start school I can show you around if you want."

"Really? Thanks you."

"Of course," Jen said.

There was another short pause. "Do you have trouble sleeping too?" El asked.

"Sometimes. I don't really know why."

"Jennifer, are we friends?"

Jen thought that was a strange thing to ask, having only known El for one day. Nonetheless, Jen thought of the saying her Aunt always says: *Any friend of yours is a friend of mine.* "What? Of course El."

"Friends don't lie."

Jen hesitated and double checked that everyone else was asleep. "Well my brother and mom died in a car accident. A lot of times when I try to sleep all I can think about is them."

"I'm sorry for your loss," El said.

"Thank you." Jen thought for a second. "I've never told anyone that before."

"Why?"

"Most people don't like to talk about their skeletons."

"Oh, I understand." El broke eye contact and looked down.

"I think it's a good thing to talk about them sometimes, though."

"Yeah," El said looking up at her.

"You know," Jen started. "You can... You can always talk to me about-well anything. I hope I never make you uncomfortable." Jen realized how silly she was being, El had 4 other friends she could talk to.

"Can I ask you something?" El said.

"Of course."

"Do you remember what it is like having a family?"

Jen was a bit shocked this is what El asked her about. "El, I've seen the way the boys treat you. That's what family is; it may not be typical, but you have a family. Screw typically, anyways."

El smile and looked around the room. "Maybe you're right."

There was a pause of silence- not uncomfortable, quite the opposite actually.

"Okay well, I'm going to try to sleep," Jen said.

"Me too, goodnight."

"Night El."

Jen let her head rest on her pillow and was out in only a few minutes.

9. Chapter 9

Monday of the next week, 9 days later

Eleven

Eleven woke up with the sound of an alarm from the second floor. She got up and took a quick shower. She threw on jeans and a top and popped 4 eggos in the toaster for her and Mike. El waited patiently for the Eggos to cook. Her head was filled with excitement and nervousness.

Mike came down the stairs and looked towards El. "Good morning, are you excited for school?"

"Yes!" she said hugging him. "I made eggos," El said as she took them out of the toaster.

"Thanks you," Mike said sleepily.

El put them on two plates and sat down at the kitchen table. They both ate breakfast together, El clearly more awake than Mike.

Mike biked them both to school, El holding him closely. They got to school about ten minutes early. Mike showed her how to use her schedule as they waited for first period to start with Mr. Clark. She had biology (El ended up finishing the whole textbook) with all her friends except Jen. She had pre-algebra with Dustin and Lucas, and history with Jen and Will. The only class she was nervous about was English third period. No one El knew was in that class.

The first bell rang and they walked into biology with Lucas, Dustin, and Will.

"Hello students. We have a new student today, this is Eleanor Ives. Let's all welcome her to the class," Mr Clark said.

Mr. Clark started the lesson on cell organelles. El already learned about it in the textbook, but she found it helpful to hear an explanation from the teacher.

Pre-algebra was also easy since she knew how to do all the problems. It went by quickly with Dustin and Lucas.

Third period El had English. She did not know anyone in her class. El walked in to room 226 alone and nervous. She took a seat in the back, secretly hoping no one would notice her. As the other students entered she tried to see if she recognized any of them. *How would I know anyone?* El thought.

However, El did recognize someone. Troy walked in, and sat right in front of her. He seemed more nervous than she was when he recognized her.

The teacher walked in and greeted the class. She introduced El and started the lesson.

The teacher did something called popcorn reading, which seemed to make some of the other students upset. This only confused El.

The teacher read first and called on El, probably because she was new. El read about a page and decided it was best to ask someone else. El realized that she only knew one person's name.

"Pop, Troy."

El heard an excessive sigh and Troy started reading. In about a half an hour, the bell rang and Troy turned around.

"What the hell is your problem? I know what I did was wrong but, I mean, you broke my arm! Can we please call it even?"

El stared at him, deciding what to say. She realized how much that must have hurt and that he deserved an honest answer. "You are the only person I know in this class."

"Oh," he said. "... sorry."

"It's fine," El said as she walked out of the classroom.

"See you around," Troy shouted.

El was off to fourth period: gym with Mike. She got to the girls

lockers room and quickly changed into shorts and a tee-shirt. She was excited to see Mike. El left the locker room and checked in with her teacher. She went in the gym and realized she had no idea what to do. She sat down on the bleachers and looked for Mike.

A few minutes past until El saw Mike enter. She gestured to him to come over.

"Hi El, how is your first day going?" Mike asked casually.

"Biology and math are fun but I'm alone in English with Troy."

"Oh that sucks, but at least you have friends in the rest of your classes."

"Yeah."

"So most gym classes I just walk on the track, want to head outside?" Mike asked.

"Sure."

They went outside and walked on the track. El explained her run-in with Troy in English.

"What a mouth breather," Mike said.

"He said sorry."

He paused. "That's unlike him."

Mike seemed somewhat angry, or at least upset. El hated it when he did this: shut her out, ignore her.

"Mike what is it?" El asked. El looked at him sternly, as if saying, *I know it's not nothing*.

Mike sighed. "I don't know, just I don't want anyone to be mean to you. Whatever they say, you can't let it get to you, ok?"

"Okay Mike." El leaned into him and held him close as they walked.

"I love you," El said.

"love you too."

They walked the track another few laps and headed back to change.

Mike and El went to lunch together. They sat with Dustin, Lucas, and Will. Mike ordered his food from the lunch line and El pulled out a sandwich.

They all sat together. Her friends wondered how her first day was, and if she was honest with herself, she was underwhelmed. El envisioned school to be very strict, and the only thing you can do it learn. What she found out early on that, while you do learn, it's also a very social experience.

After lunch, El said her goodbye to Mike and her other friends and headed to academic support with Jen.

El got to the class and saw Jen wave to her.

"Hi El! We saved you a seat." Jen sat at a four person table with two other girls.

"El, this is Lilly and Alex," Jennifer said.

"Nice to meet you," El said while taking a seat.

"So where did you move from El?" Lilly asked.

"Sweden," El said thinking of the time before she used the AV room.

"Wow that's cool!"

El turned to Jen, "What are we doing this period?"

"This is academic support. Most of the time we just talk, but it's really meant to do homework or ask teachers for extra help."

"Thank you," El said.

El took a book from her bag and got to work, but she was continuously distracted by the girls at her table. She decided it was not bother and closed her book.

"Sorry El," Jen said while laughing.

"It's okay, I'll just do it later."

They talked about music, then suddenly the conversation switched.

"El is dating Mike Wheeler," Jen said rather bluntly.

"Ooo... He's kinda cute," Alex said.

"He seems really shy," said Lilly.

"Ever since Will came back he seemed to have opened up more; they all seem to have," Jen said and gave El a smile.

"So... are you two serious?" Alex asked.

El didn't understand. "What do you mean?"

"Well... how long have you been going out?"

"Three weeks I think," El said.

"So no," Lilly said with a smile.

"Let's leave El alone," Jen said.

"Oh we are just having some fun."

Jen tried to change the subject. "Has Dustin asked you out yet Lilly?"

"What?" Lilly said.

"Come on spill it."

"Ugh, fine he did."

"And?" Jen asked.

"I said no."

"What? Why?"

"I don't know, I just didn't feel very comfortable."

The girls kept talking but El only thought about how Lilly declined Dustin. She remembered how Lucas said that it hurts when girls say no.

"You should have said yes," El blurted out.

"What?" Jen asked.

El realized that she interrupted but ignored her embarrassment. "Lilly you should have gone out with Dustin."

Lilly's face went red.

"Why did you say no? You must have hurt him a lot," El asked.

"Really?" Lilly said.

"Yes."

She looked down with. face of guilt. "Well, I guess one date can't hurt. I'll talk to him."

The girls went back to talking. El listened, trying to understand all they were saying.

Soon after the bell rang and El headed to History. El found everything she learned fascinating. Jen sat to her left, and Will was next to Jen. They were a bit distracting, but El was happy they were there.

Last period El had band. Karen rented out a trumpet for her, but, having so much reading to do, she never had a chance to practice. Mike said he would help her catch up. The teacher had assigned seats, but Mike convinced him that they could sit together so she could ask him questions. He wrote in all the fingerings for the notes for her to help her learn.

The bell finally rang and they packed up their instruments. Mike and El went to his bike and went home.

El hit the books working away quickly so she could talk to Mike. However, she wanted to practice her trumpet.

After a few hours of work and studying, El went upstairs to Mike's bedroom and knocked.

"Come in," El heard through the door.

"Hey Mike."

"Hey El, everything okay?" Mike asked. He was reading a comic book.

"Yes, I was wondering if you would teach me how to play trumpet?"

"Of course, want to go downstairs?"

"Sure."

Mike grabbed his case from next to his bed and walked downstairs with El. They went down into the basement and set up their instruments.

After teaching her how to buzz properly and some of the basic notes, Mike flipped through his folder.

"This is a duet," he said. "It is probably too hard for you now, but maybe in a few weeks we can play it together."

Mike took out the sheet music to happy birthday.

"This shouldn't be too h-" Mike cut off mid sentence.

"What?"

"It's nothing, just let's try to play this," he said taking out Let's Go Band.

"Mike what is birthday?" El said reading the other paper.

He sighed and looked away. "It's the day you were born."

"Do I have one?" El asked.

"I'm sure you do. It's just..."

"Mike?"

"It's just we don't know it."

"Oh," El said, feeling a bit sad.

"Maybe we can just pick a date for you."

"What date?"

Mike thought for a second. "We found you November 7, want that to be your birthday? It's at least a cause for celebration," Mike said.

"Okay," El started. "November 7."

"So, want to try playing Let's Go Band?"

El nodded and did her best to hit the notes with him.

After a few hours of practice, their lips began to hurt and they called it a night.

Mike said goodnight to El and began walking up towards his room.

"Mike?" El said. She didn't want to be alone she didn't want him to leave her.

"Yes El?" Mike said with the smile she loved.

"Stay with me?"

"Of course."

El watched him get into her bed. El fell asleep in his arms, feeling like she finally belonged somewhere.